



June 5 2017 | 9:00 – 11:15 am

Conference Rooms 5 and 6, 10 Park Plaza, Boston

## **SUMMARY**

### *Introduction:*

Pat Field (CBI) opened the meeting and reviewed the agenda. The group approved the April meeting summary.

Mr. Field explained that beyond the model runs already planned, there were two remaining runs available to model before running a “package” scenario to test preferred components. The intended plan was that one of these runs would be a transportation policy or infrastructure scenario (such as the proposed Orange Line spur scenario) and the second would be an alternative land use scenario.

### *Review of alternatives, projects, and metrics for evaluating impact:*

Scott Peterson (CTPS) briefly reviewed the developing list of metrics that would be used to evaluate and compare the performance of the alternatives. The preliminary list for roadway projects included VMT, VHT, traffic volumes, intersection delay, level of service, and person throughput. The preliminary list for transit projects included new transit trips, boardings, mode share, revenue, transfer activity, and capacity analysis. He also addressed the inclusion of environmental, air quality, bicycle and pedestrian use, and cost analyses.

### *Results of “Ramps and Lanes” Alternatives 5 and 5.1:*

Scott Peterson (CTPS) presented the results of the Ramps and Lanes scenario model, which included a new I-93 on ramp at City Square, an extended I-93 off ramp at Exit 28 to bypass Sullivan Square, and converting the southbound HOV lane to a general purpose express lane. He explained that these components were packaged together for ease of modeling, but emphasized that each of the components had independent purposes and utility.

The City Square I-93 On-ramp users were primarily from Charlestown or the North End, with destinations primarily along I-93 north of Somerville. It caused a minor improvement in Sullivan Square congestion, primarily by helping existing vehicle trips in the afternoon commute.

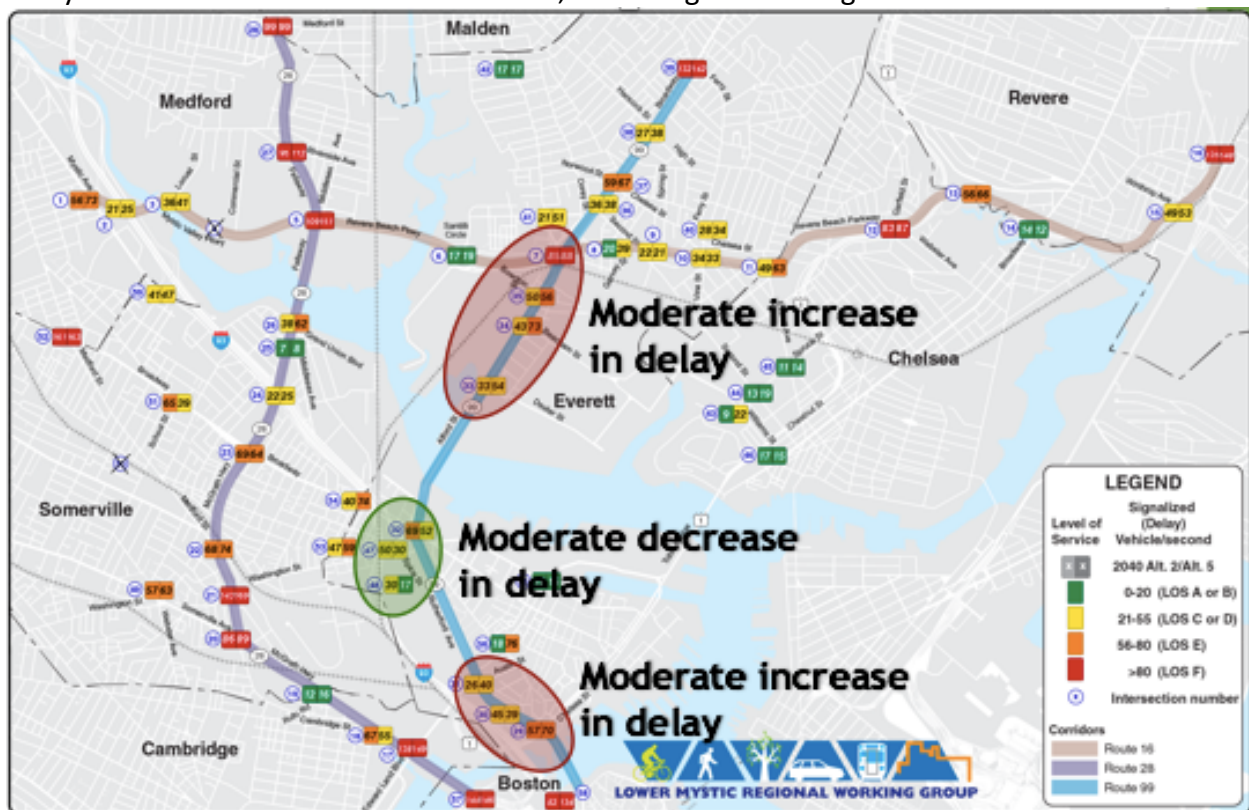
The HOV lane conversion had no mode shift benefits; the primary benefits were to existing vehicle trips in the morning commute. It increased I-93SB carrying capacity at the expense of ridesharing, and showed some improvements to operations by helping problems of weaving and merging.



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The Alford Street I-93 off-ramp had limited use, with primary benefits to existing vehicle trips in the afternoon. I-93 volumes did not change and it did not help improve Sullivan Square congestion, with fewer benefits over all than the City Square ramp.

The model showed that for both the morning and afternoon commutes, the alternative over all resulted in a moderate increase in delays in two intersection areas and a slight decrease in delay in one intersection area on Route 99, according to the image below:



Group members asked for more clarification on the cause of the increased delays and whether the added left turn on Washington Street could be omitted in the model, if it was a source of increase congestion. CTPS agreed to investigate further and report back to the group at the next meeting. Mark Abbott (CTPS) clarified that the new off-ramp induced more demand on Route 99, adding 900 additional cars to the route in the afternoon commute. Mr. Peterson further clarified that while the alternative resulted in some VMT savings, many of these savings were found in a larger area toward the fringes of the study area.

Group members acknowledged that though the results of this model run indicated that it could worsen, rather than improve, the congestion issues on Route 99 and in the Sullivan Square area, the findings were very valuable in that they highlighted the need to explore other potential solutions to those issues. Tim Reardon (MAPC) highlighted that part of the impetus to model this scenario was to be responsive to public input calling for highway improvements



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around Sullivan Square. Mayor DeMaria of Everett encouraged a focus on creating transit options—especially for communities without sufficient transit access—to reduce reliance on auto transportation and reduce traffic congestion.

Mr. Peterson outlined the impacts of the conversation of the HOV lane to a general purpose lane. Overall, for that section of I-93 Southbound, person throughput increased from 18,900 to 21,00, with vehicles increasing from 12,400 to 13,900, while person per vehicle decreased slightly from 1.52 to 1.51. David Mohler (MassDOT) commented that though the option of converting the HOV lane to a general purpose lane would increase person throughput on the highway, it would worsen travel for HOV lane users, including bus riders. Group members asked for additional information on air quality comparisons between the HOV lane and general purpose lane options, which CTPS planned to investigate further.

### *Results of “Buses and Trains” Alternatives 6 and 6.1:*

Mark Abbott (CTPS) reviewed the results of Alternatives 6 and 6.1. Alt. 6 inputs included the Green Line Extension Phase II to Mystic Valley Parkway (Route 16), a new commuter rail stop at Sullivan Square, and a Silver line extension from new Chelsea station and Glendale Square in Everett to North Station and Kendall Square. Alt. 6.1 included the same components and added residential parking constraints in some areas and commercial parking price increases (to \$22/day) in some TAZs.

Mayor DeMaria and Jay Monty (Everett) asked if the use of the commuter rail right of way (ROW) behind the casino would still be considered for the BRT route to avoid congestion on Broadway. CTPS clarified that given the technical and logistical issues with using that ROW, staff considered it prudent to model the alternative as proposed, with the understanding that it could potentially be improved if a better ROW were ultimately shown to be workable through additional study.

Mr. Abbott summarized the results of Alternative 6. The new Mystic Valley Parkway station in the Green Line Extension Phase II was well utilized for a station without a parking facility. It had little impact on Sullivan Square congestion. It worked well with the parking and auto ownership transportation demand management (TDM) policies.

The option of the new commuter rail station on the Newburyport/Rockport line at Sullivan Square had about 700 boardings daily. It provided better connectivity to buses heading to Cambridge and Somerville. It also had little impact on Sullivan Square.

The new BRT route options were both well utilized and lead to significant mode shift. They had some minor benefits on traffic flow around Sullivan Square. They also worked nicely with the TDM strategies in 6.1, which increased their use significantly. CTPS clarified that some of the increased boardings in Alternatives 6 and 6.1 could already be transit riders, but some of these



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riders may be moving from a 3-seat to a 1-seat ride. Group members asked for additional information on whether the Silver Line would be able to accommodate the large increase in riders in the scenario. Tad Read (Boston) requested additional information on mode share change for Alternative 6/6.1, and urged that mode share be included as a metric in alternative analyses going forward.

### *Review of inputs for “Ride, Walk, and Bike” Alternative 7:*

CTPS reviewed the inputs for Alternative 7, which included separated bike/pedestrian facilities through parts of the study area connecting to regional trails, pedestrian bridges over the Mystic and Malden Rivers, and the addition of an infill “Rivers Edge” Orange Line Station. CTPS clarified that the model would assume improved Orange Line headways to 3 or 3.5 minutes, though the cost for the improvements needed to achieve these headways were not yet defined. The group requested staff investigate further the best route for the pedestrian bridge before modeling.

Brad Rawson (Somerville) asked that staff assure that the bike/ped services in the model addressed the demand that the proposed Community Path intended to meet. Eric Bourassa (MAPC) commented that it had been difficult to develop inputs to model water transportation as part of this model run. MAPC recommended that water transportation be addressed in the group’s report with off-model/qualitative analysis.

The group agreed to proceed with modeling Alternative 7, pending resolution of some of the details with bike/ped services, including the bridge.

### *Update on cost estimation for alternatives:*

Staff provided a brief update on estimated costs for some of the alternatives being analyzed:

#### **Alt. 3**

- Bus lane development (\$20,000,000)
- Bus purchases (\$80,000,000)
- Maintenance facility (\$160,000,000)
- Bike/pedestrian infrastructure (tbd)

#### **Alt. 5**

- New City Square On-Ramp to I-93 Northbound (\$48,400,000)
- New I-93 Off-Ramp at Exit 28 (\$64,700,000)
- Conversion of I-93 Southbound HOV Lane (\$1M to \$2M)

Staff planned to continue researching costs for the remaining alternatives.

### *Approving inputs for Alternative 8:*

CTPS reviewed the proposal to analyze an “Orange Line Spur” for Alternative 8. The proposed spur concept would parallel the existing Newburyport/Rockport commuter rail ROW from



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Sullivan Station northward to Route 16 before entering a tunnel with a terminus near Glendale Square. Possible stations could be located at Everett Square, Sweetser Circle, Glendale Square, and Gateway Center. The Orange Line headways would need to be improved to accommodate the new stops without compromising the existing route headways. Mr. Peterson clarified that this would likely mean that the route north of the spur would have 6-minute headways and that the “trunk” of the Orange Line would maintain 3-minute headways.

Mr. Monty (Everett) commented that though the alternative would clearly be expensive, it was worth modeling to compare its impacts and benefits against other alternatives, especially when compared to the cumulative cost of other alternatives. He also asked the group to consider whether it would be worth modeling an additional distance of the spur to reach Route 1 and the creation of a Park and Ride facility there, similar to Alewife, to reach additional commuter ridership. The group agreed to model the Orange Line Spur as Alt. 8, pending an offline discussion to resolve the location of the terminus and a possible parking facility in Everett on Route 1.

### *Next Steps:*

A public forum to solicit public input will be held on September 25, with further details forthcoming from the staff.

The group agreed to add an additional meeting in August in order to accommodate the workload and stay on schedule ahead of the public forum.

Mr. Field reviewed decisions and next steps, and adjourned the meeting at 11:30.